



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 20 October 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
20 OCTOBER 1967

1. South Vietnam

In a talk with Ambassador Bunker yesterday, Ky expressed growing impatience with what he regards as Thieu's overcautious approach to the formation of the new government. Ky is especially put off by Thieu's delay in deciding on the cabinet and getting it in place.

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2. Vietnam
Demonstrations

The world-wide demonstrations this weekend, in support of those in the US, are unlikely to generate much popular support. Planning for the marches is fuzzy, and security officials in most Free World countries feel they can prevent damage to US installations. In Communist countries, the demonstrations will probably be tightly controlled, but there will be room for bombastic anti-US diatribes in Havana.

Two possible hot points are Tokyo and West Berlin. The Japanese trade organization, the Communists, and the Socialists together may get tens of thousands into the streets.

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West Berlin police expect some 6,000 to demonstrate, led by leftist students.

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3. Vietnam

The Viet Cong radio broadcast a commentary late Wednesday ridiculing president-elect Thieu's "babbling statements about peace negotiations." Since US leaders "cannot deceive anyone" on this issue, "what can the vile lackeys do?" the broadcast asked.

4. Communist China

Peking appears to be making an effort to put its governmental and party machinery, badly battered by the Cultural Revolution, back into working condition. References to the party are becoming more frequent, and important leaders who were reduced in the press and radio to faceless "responsible officials" at the height of the revolution, now generally rate a full listing of their party and governmental titles.

5. Nigeria

Stiffened resistance by the Biafrans, who seemed to be on the ropes a week ago, is producing the bloodiest fighting so far. (Some 1,000 federals were killed in one night late last week.) Ojukwu, meanwhile, seems to be backing away from the projected "peace talks" in London,

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6. Greece

The King and junta leader Papadopoulos still seem to be trying to stare each other down--or wait each other out--on the issue of Papadopoulos becoming deputy prime minister. We believe they are likely to postpone the confrontation neither wants right now by a relatively harmless reshuffling of the cabinet.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

US Pacifists Report on Hanoi Trip: Another dispatch from Australian Communist journalist Wilfred Burchett filed prior to his leaving Hanoi on 18 October reports the views of seven Americans who have been in Hanoi for the past 18 days. The group reportedly came away feeling that Hanoi was prepared for a long war involving great sacrifices and that the regime was confident of its ability to endure and to achieve ultimate victory. Burchett reported that the Americans accepted Hanoi's contention that if the bombings are stopped there could be talks, and found the Vietnamese definitely not holding out for "a 1968 repudiation of Johnson" before negotiating.

The press dispatch also stated that the Americans talked with three US prisoners of war and carried away letters to the families of 30 others. Finally, Burchett reported that the group has been given a message of greetings to the US antiwar movement by Premier Pham Van Dong which will be read at the 21 October protest demonstration in Washington.

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More North Vietnamese Comments on War: Mai Van Bo, North Vietnam's chief representative in France and probably the most authoritative Vietnamese Communist spokesman in the West, said recently that he does not believe the US will risk an invasion of North Vietnam, but he warned that if this took place, the US would encounter guerrilla action which would tie down large numbers of American soldiers. The US would be "surrounded, isolated and destroyed," and Hanoi would not have to call for foreign volunteers if the US attempted even to occupy only a limited section of the North.

Bo also stressed that the North Vietnamese regime is bent on carrying on "until final victory" as expressed in General Giap's latest article. However, he acknowledged that while the majority of the people

in the North share the government's determination, there are "a few individuals who are becoming weary of the war and would like to see it end at almost any price."

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Hanoi Condemns US Statement on the War: Hanoi has published a rejection of Secretary of State Rusk's press conference of 12 October as well as a general condemnation of other recent US statements on the war. An authoritative Nhan Dan article broadcast by Hanoi on 19 October claimed that Rusk's statements in effect conceded that the American people were demanding an end to the war. The article ridiculed Rusk's reference to the "American commitment in Vietnam" and rejected his suggestion that there are two Vietnams. Taking note of the current antiwar movement in the US, Nhan Dan claimed that this week's protests show that the American antiwar movement is making progress.

The broadcast asserted that everyone has seen that all recent US statements on the war are "sheer deception" and pointed to the recent call for an end to the bombing by many delegates at the United Nations as evidence of growing US isolation. It closed with a prediction that a continuation of the present "reactionary" policy would only lead to heavier military and political setbacks for the US.

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Chinese Anti-Soviet Tirade Embarrasses Hanoi Leaders: Top North Vietnamese leaders were visibly embarrassed by a blatantly anti-Soviet speech delivered by the Chinese charge d'affaires during the Chinese National Day reception on 29 September. Premier Pham Van Dong was even seen to sink his head in his hands during the tirade. Ho Chi Minh, Le Duan, and General Giap were also present. The Soviet representative and his East European friends walked out early in the speech, but not the Rumanian, who remained "smiling narrowly."

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More from David Schoenbrun: U Thant says he has talked with David Schoenbrun recently and is now more than ever convinced that the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam is "very independent" of Hanoi. Thant told Ambassador Goldberg that Schoenbrun had been even more explicit on this than Harrison Salisbury had been.

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Hanoi's Comment on "Che" Guevara: Hanoi has paid its tribute to the late guerrilla leader. According to a Hanoi international broadcast on 19 October, that day's issue of the party daily, Nhan Dan, front-paged his portrait and biography and contained a message of condolence from the Vietnam Workers Party to the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party.

Nhan Dan described Guevara as a "staunch revolutionary," claiming that he set a shining example of high revolutionary ardor. The paper asserted that the entire Vietnamese armed forces and people are resolved to "turn their hatred for the US imperialists and their lackeys who have murdered comrade Guevara into strength to defeat the US aggressors and the Thieu-Ky traitors."

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Russian Correspondent on Conditions in North Vietnam: A Pravda correspondent, in Laos on a holiday from Hanoi, gave a US Embassy official there some

reflections on conditions in Hanoi. (Incidentally, he arrived in Vientiane on 17 October via the International Control Commission plane from Hanoi, which seems to be running on schedule again.) The correspondent claimed morale was high and determination unshaken despite hardships of bombing. As for the bombing, he claimed the military effects are "one tenth" of what the US thinks, and civilian damage and loss of life higher than Hanoi admits. He noted that pellet antipersonnel bombs with delayed fuses cause "particular horror" in cities.

The correspondent added that he had filed an eyewitness dispatch to Pravda about the destruction of a village by bombing which, to judge by his description, was a juicy "atrocities" story. For reasons unknown to him, Pravda did not publish the story.

II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi Reports Antiwar Activities of US Negroes: A Hanoi Vietnamese language broadcast of 15 October cites a US news service article stating that the antiwar movement by US Negroes is developing on an "unprecedented scale." The article asserts that "progressive" Negroes in the US have strengthened their relations with "patriots" in the US and the world, and that the antidraft movement among Negroes has caused draft officials to ignore hundreds of cases of refusal to submit to medical examinations for military service. In addition, the morale of Negroes serving in Vietnam is said to be "very low."

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More Comments on US Antiwar Pressures: Mai Van Bo, Hanoi's man in Paris whose comments were summarized earlier in this paper, also had something to say about antiwar pressures in the US and the Free World. He said the war is "less and less popular" in the US and pointed to recent speeches in the United Nations as proof of "many countries demanding peace." These factors, Bo went on, "create disquiet in the American electorate" and lead to the conclusion that "some day Washington will give up." Bo said the main Communist hope for eventual victory, however, lies in

frustrating the US military effort and in waiting "perhaps for a long time," for a political victory.

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More on Immolations in the US: Yesterday Hanoi radio returned to the US burnings, noting that "in only four days, two US citizens immolated themselves to oppose Johnson's war in Vietnam." From this Hanoi generalizes that "the American people have realized more and more clearly that the war conducted by the US administration in a country thousands of miles away, which has no enmity toward them, is only a dirty colonialist war. This war is against the independence and freedom of the Vietnamese people, against peace and justice, and runs counter to the genuine interests of the American people. It has wasted thousands of American lives and its burden is weighing heavily on the American taxpayers. It betrays the tradition of democracy of the American people and ruins the US reputation."

In conclusion, the broadcast said, "the Vietnamese people bow in respect before the sacrifices of Miss Hiroko and Mrs. Beaumont. They highly appreciate the American people's movement to end the Johnson war in Vietnam."

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